

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1957.

Index numbers of retail prices for the June quarter of 1957 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases,
June Quarter, 1957.

City.	Aggregate All Groups.			All Groups, excluding Price Movements in Potatoes and Onions.		
	Index Number.	Increase from-		Index Number.	Increase from-	
		June Qtr., 1956.	March Qtr., 1957.		June Qtr., 1956.	March Qtr., 1957.
Brisbane ..	2337	1.7	0.7	2349	3.8	0.8
Toowoomba ..	2373	1.3	0.6	2386	3.6	0.6
Rockhampton	2374	2.0	0.6	2384	4.2	0.8
Townsville	2469	1.9	0.9	2473	3.5	0.8
Bundaberg	2335	2.4	1.3	2342	4.6	1.3
Warwick ..	2325	1.0	1.1	2331	3.1	0.9

The "C" Series index for Brisbane in the June quarter of 1957 recorded a rise of 0.7 per cent. for all groups. Potatoes showed a small fall compared with their average price during the preceding quarter, so that the index for all groups excluding potatoes and onions rose slightly more than the complete index, viz., by 0.8 per cent. Increases in other cities were very similar to the increase for Brisbane, the only large difference being in the Bundaberg index which rose by 1.3 per cent. This was chiefly due to a larger rise in clothing and footwear prices in that city. Increases during the quarter, as in the previous quarter, were very evenly spread among the various sections of the regimen. For Brisbane, food and groceries (excluding potatoes and onions) increased by 0.8 per cent., clothing and footwear by 0.6 per cent., miscellaneous items by 0.9 per cent., and rent by 1.5 per cent.

It was pointed out in the previous issue of this bulletin that a fairly steady upward trend has recently been shown by the index (when adjusted to exclude potatoes and onions). This upward trend which averaged 0.8 per cent. per quarter from the September quarter of 1954 to the March quarter of 1957 was continued at exactly the same rate into the June quarter.

Since the September quarter of 1952, when a rapid inflation which had lasted for two years ended, the food and groceries section of the index has risen in the same proportion as the whole index, i.e., by 11.6 per cent. Rent has increased more - by 14.0 per cent. - and miscellaneous items still more - by 20.1 per cent. On the other hand, the clothing and footwear section has risen by only 6.4 per cent., but after a period of relative stability prices in this section have been increasing very similarly to food prices during the last four quarters.

Changes in sections of the index are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases^a, June Quarter, 1957.

City.	Food and Groceries.			Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1957.		From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1957.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1957.
	A	A	B				
Brisbane ..	208.5	0.4	0.8	291.4	0.6	137.9	0.9
Toowoomba ..	231.1	-0.4	-0.5	296.7	1.1	136.9	2.5
Rockhampton	197.3	0.6	1.3	288.8	0.6	144.6	0.6
Townsville	192.6	1.1	0.9	289.2	0.2	148.3	0.7
Bundaberg ..	198.7	1.7	1.5	294.4	1.8	136.1	0.7
Warwick ..	220.2	1.9	1.4	293.7	0.5	142.4	0.6

a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

Food and Groceries.

Compared with the March quarter, this section of the index generally showed a slight upward movement. The increase was greatest in Warwick, Bundaberg, and Townsville. This was brought about by quarterly average price rises, in all cities, in bread, jam, canned fruits, eggs, milk, tea, and onions. Added to this, potato prices rose slightly in Warwick, Townsville, and Bundaberg, while the continued price decrease in potatoes in Rockhampton, Brisbane, and Toowoomba had a cushioning effect on the general rises, in these centres.

Clothing and Footwear.

As customary for a winter quarter, this group also showed a general increase. Winter seasonal lines of clothing proved to be the main contributing factor, especially in the women's section, while prices in the men's and children's sections rose to a much lesser extent. The main items to increase were women's winter wear but increases of varying magnitude were also recorded for men's suits, children's overcoats and sundry other items of winter goods. Bundaberg and Toowoomba recorded the greatest rises and Townsville the least.

Miscellaneous.

There was an average increase in "other" miscellaneous items in all cities, and further to this gas charges rose in Toowoomba and gas and firewood prices in Brisbane.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

Rent increased in Brisbane (1.5 per cent.), Rockhampton (0.7 per cent.), and Townsville (2.1 per cent.), but remained unchanged elsewhere.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1957, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Groups.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	5	19	7 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	7
Rockhampton	1	0	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	3	1	0	11
Townsville	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	2	1	2	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Bundaberg	19	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	5		16	0 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Warwick ..	19	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$		14	7 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	5 $\frac{3}{4}$

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

The Commonwealth industrial authority suspended automatic ("cost of living") adjustments after the adjustment which operated from the beginning of the first pay-period in August, 1953. Following applications for the resumption of automatic adjustments and an increase in the basic wage, the basic wage for males in all States was increased by 10s. from June, 1956, and again by 10s. from May, 1957, but on each occasion restoration of the quarterly adjustments was refused.

In Queensland, the State Industrial Court, after the publication of the index numbers for the September and December quarters of 1953, increased the basic wage by 3s. for males and 2s. for females on each occasion. During the next five quarters, the "C" Series index number for Brisbane recorded three small upward movements and two small down-ward movements, and the Court made no adjustment in the basic wage. From June quarter, 1955, to December quarter, 1956, adjustments to compensate for price increases were made for all quarters except two, the increases aggregating 16s. for males and 11s. 6d. for females. Since that time, a decrease of 2s. in the rate for males following the March quarter index was offset by an increase of 2s. for the June quarter, while the rate for females has remained unchanged.

The New South Wales Industrial Commission suspended quarterly basic wage adjustments from August, 1953, but resumed them in November, 1955, with the addition of the full amount indicated by the rise in the index number during the period of suspension. In the most recent quarter, an increase of 2s. for adult males in Sydney followed the application of the index number. In Victoria, where wages are determined by Wages Boards, automatic adjustments were continued under special legislation until June quarter, 1956, after which they were suspended. In South Australia, the State basic wage was adjusted as from 20th May, 1957, by the addition of 10s. per week for adult males and 7s. for adult females, bringing it to the same level as the newly declared Commonwealth rate. The Western Australian Court of Arbitration made no adjustment to the basic wage after July, 1953, until August, 1955, when an increase was made on account of price rises in the June quarter. Seven subsequent increases have been made, the latest of which operated from 19th July, 1957, the rise for adult males in Perth being 3s. 1d. In Tasmania, quarterly adjustments were suspended from August, 1953, to February, 1956, when the total increase, amounting to 17s. in Hobart, due to rises in the index number during the period of suspension, was added. Adjustments were made in the next two quarters, but the State Wages Boards decided to suspend automatic adjustments for a trial period thereafter.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.

Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index.				Commonwealth Basic Wage. Males. ^a	State Basic Wage.									
	March Quarter, 1957.		June Quarter, 1957.			Males.			Females.			Date of Operation. ^b			
	A	B	A	B		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane	2321	2330	2337	2349	11 18 0	12	1	0	8	2	6	29.	7.57		
Sydney ..	2604	2602	2618	2611	13 3 0	13	10	0	10	2	6	Aug.,	1957		
Melbourne	2546	2536	2573	2558	12 15 0	13	3	0	9	17	0	Aug.,	1956c		
Adelaide	2432	2434	2470	2466	12 11 0	12	11	0	9	8	0	20.	5.57		
Perth ..	2714	2708	2750	2746	12 16 0	13	12	9	8	17	3	19.	7.57		
Hobart ..	2688	2685	2707	2704	13 2 0	13	12	0	10	4	0	Aug.,	1956c		

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

a Operative first pay-period beginning on or after 1st May, 1957. The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

b Where dates are not quoted wage rates operate from beginning of first pay-period in month shown.

c No State wage is actually declared. The rate fixed by the Commonwealth Court was usually followed until August, 1953. For later adjustments, see above.

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BRISBANE.

9th August, 1957.

The "C" Series Retail Price Index.

(Base for Each Section: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended March, 1957.	Year Ended June, 1957.	Quarter Ended-				
				June, 1956.	Sept., 1956.	Dec., 1956.	March, 1957.	June, 1957.
1. Aggregate - All Groups.								
Brisbane	863	2331	2341	2299	2370	2335	2321
Toowoomba	851	2372	2379	2343	2404	2382	2358
Rockhampton	861	2362	2374	2327	2392	2370	2360
Townsville	912	2448	2460	2424	2478	2444	2447
Bundaberg	841	2307	2321	2280	2326	2317	2304
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	2343	2353	2312	2380	2347	2334
Warwick	822	2323	2329	2301	2357	2332	2300
2. All Groups EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a).								
Brisbane	863	2296	2318	2263	2287	2305	2330
Toowoomba	851	2336	2357	2303	2320	2348	2372
Rockhampton	861	2328	2352	2288	2319	2341	2364
Townsville	912	2418	2439	2389	2406	2421	2454
Bundaberg	841	2270	2295	2240	2249	2279	2311
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	2308	2330	2275	2298	2317	2343
Warwick	822	2285	2302	2261	2274	2293	2311
3. Food and Groceries.								
Brisbane	856	2720	2709	2684	2853	2711	2631
Toowoomba	814	2794	2777	2764	2905	2801	2705
Rockhampton	895	2716	2707	2698	2814	2708	2644
Townsville	955	2837	2829	2825	2946	2812	2764
Bundaberg	903	2742	2735	2724	2843	2748	2652
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	2733	2722	2701	2859	2725	2646
Warwick	846	2776	2762	2765	2901	2778	2659
4. Food and Groceries EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a).								
Brisbane	856	2623	2646	2585	2624	2628	2655
Toowoomba	814	2693	2712	2651	2673	2705	2743
Rockhampton	895	2616	2640	2587	2606	2620	2649
Townsville	955	2748	2768	2725	2743	2745	2779
Bundaberg	903	2635	2660	2610	2625	2637	2669
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	2636	2658	2599	2634	2640	2669
Warwick	846	2669	2687	2651	2667	2669	2687
5. Clothing and Footwear.								
Brisbane	829	3177	3204	3134	3155	3192	3225
Toowoomba	829	3199	3233	3152	3176	3214	3252
Rockhampton	845	3198	3237	3129	3166	3228	3267
Townsville	840	3210	3235	3167	3183	3226	3262
Bundaberg	839	3204	3239	3170	3170	3223	3252
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	831	3183	3212	3138	3160	3199	3234
Warwick	825	3181	3207	3142	3159	3190	3231

(a) Excluded as from September quarter, 1955.